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ABSTRACT

Outcomes of Project A+, a school-based improvement (SBI) partnership developed between International Business Machines (IBM) and the Austin Independent School District, are described in this document. SBI is a vehicle for restructuring schools to meet the goal that all students will function successfully at or beyond their appropriate grade levels. This document evaluates 16 Phase 1 and 12 Phase 2 schools that joined the project in 1990-91 and 1991-92, respectively. Methodology involved interviews with six central office administrators; three surveys--a campus, an employee, and a school climate survey; and analyses of campus improvement plans and student achievement data. Findings indicate that the 1991-92 student outcomes are mixed, and that a drop in the school climate tends to occur during Phase 1, which improves during the second phase. The SBI campuses have not yet found the AISD objectives to be reasonable and attainable and do not see SBI as a vehicle for achieving them. The following obstacles to success were identified: varied expectations, levels of understanding, and ownership; differential training for Phases 1 and 2; lack of adequate and timely clarification of roles, policies, and parameters; lack of universal commitment to SBI concept from the board, central office, and others; need for ongoing training for whole faculties; varying degrees of willingness to practice shared decision making and consensus; issues of trust; and the impact of change. Six recommendations are highlighted. Two figures are included. Attachments contain the SBI timeline, model, mission statement and goals, and action plan summary. (LMI)

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Project A+
School Based Improvement in AISD 1991-92

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Project A+/School Based Improvement (SBI), 1991-92

Austin Independent School District
Department of Management Information
Office of Research and Evaluation

Executive Summary

Author: Marilyn Rumbaut

Background

In the spring of 1989, a long-term partnership began between International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) and the Austin Independent School District (AISD) to form Project A+. The goal of Project A+ is to identify fundamental changes necessary to enhance education, and to marshal community support for those changes in order to ensure a quality educational environment for Austin.

School Based Improvement (SBI) is a model which was developed over a two-year period in a collaborative effort spearheaded by the Empowerment Momentum Team, and involving AISD administrators, teachers, parents, and other representatives from business and the community. It is a decentralized model in which the initiative for school improvement comes from the local school campus. SBI is based on the concepts of decentralization of decision-making authority, shared local decision-making, and local accountability. The strategic goal of Project A+ is that all AISD students will function successfully at or beyond age appropriate grade level. SBI is a vehicle for restructuring schools in order to meet this goal. The areas in which it affords campuses more flexibility and greater decision-making authority are: Budget, Instructional Delivery, Personnel, and Staff Development.

In the spring of 1990, AISD schools were invited to apply to be pilot SBI schools beginning with the 1990-91 school year. There were 16 schools selected, representing elementary and secondary, and these Phase I schools were joined by 12 Phase II schools the following (1991-92) school year.

This evaluation focuses on the 28 Phase I and Phase II SBI schools.

Major Findings

- The SBI campuses, representing a cross-section of the District, clearly have not yet "bought-into" the four AISD objectives, in terms of finding them realistic and attainable, and in terms of seeing SBI as a vehicle for making progress toward achieving them.

- The District training provided to the Phase II SBI campuses (but not offered the first year for the Phase I campuses) did enhance their skills and confidence in analyzing and using ORE-generated data on student achievement in order to make decisions at the campus that impact student learning.

- Based on feedback from surveys, interviews, meetings, training, and a public forum on SBI, it is clear that there have been many obstacles to overcome in the piloting of SBI. Chief among these obstacles are:

  - ➤ varied expectations, levels of understanding, and ownership of SBI;
  - ➤ differential training for Phase I & II, and for central office staff;
  - ➤ lack of adequate and timely clarification of roles, policies, and parameters coming from central administration;
  - ➤ lack of universal commitment to SBI concept from Board, central office, and others;
  - ➤ need for ongoing training for whole faculties instead of "training to train;"
  - ➤ varying degrees of willingness to practice collaborative decision-making and consensus;
  - ➤ issues of trust; and
  - ➤ the impact of change.

- School Climate Survey results suggest that for the SBI schools, a drop tends to occur in the first year of SBI. For the Phase I campuses reflecting this pattern, the drop was followed by an improvement in school climate from the first year to the second year of SBI.

- There were 16 of the 28 SBI schools (eight Phase I and eight Phase II) whose 1991-92 School Climate Survey subscale scores were below the District mean in one or more of three factors. Of those 16, there were nine schools (five Phase I and four Phase II) whose subscale scores reflected a drop from the previous year on these factors. These nine SBI schools are the ones for whom active targeting of the weak school climate areas will be critical if they are to succeed as SBI campuses.

- The 1991-92 student outcomes for Phase I and Phase II SBI schools are mixed. Overall, the Phase I groups at the elementary and high school levels were more successful at achieving and exceeding predicted gains in achievement (ROSE) than were the corresponding Phase II groups, and similarly more successful than the non-SBI elementary and high school groups. The opposite was true at the middle school level, where the Phase II group was more successful than were both the Phase I SBI group and the non-SBI middle school group.

Budget Implications

Mandate:
SBI mandated by school board.

Fund Amount:
$108,398

Funding Source:
Local

Implications:
Continuation of the Project A+ SBI resources will be of vital importance as SBI is implemented districtwide during the 1992-93 school year as mandated by House Bill 2885.

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PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS SUMMARY

School Based Improvement

EFFECT	COST	PROGRAM
+	$	SCHOOL BASED IMPROVEMENT

Effect is expressed as contributing to any of the five AISD strategic objectives.

+	Positive, needs to be maintained or expanded.
0	Not significant, needs to be improved and modified.
-	Negative, needs major modification or replacement.
Blank	Unknown

Cost is the expense over the regular District per-student expenditure.

0	No cost or minimal.
$	Indirect costs and overhead, but no separate budget.
$$	Some direct costs, but under $500 per student.
$$$	Major direct costs for teachers, staff, and/or equipment in the range of $500 per student or more.

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BACKGROUND/EVOLUTION OF PROJECT A+ SBI IN AISD

In the spring of 1989, a long-term partnership began between International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) and The Austin Independent School District (AISD) to form Project A+.*

IBM/AISD PROJECT A+

The goal of Project A+ is to identify fundamental changes necessary to enhance education and to marshal community support for those changes in order to ensure a quality educational environment for Austin.

School Based Improvement (SBI) is a model which was developed over a two-year period in a collaborative effort involving AISD administrators, teachers, parents and other representatives from business and the community. The concept is based on the premise that improvement is the goal of every school, and that the measure of improvement is growth in student learning. It is a decentralized model in which the initiative for school improvement comes from the local school campus. SBI is based on three fundamental concepts: (1) decentralization of decision-making authority, (2) shared decision making, and (3) accountability. (See attachments for SBI evolutionary timeline, model, mission and goals.)

SBI MODEL

The strategic goal of Project A+ is that all AISD students will function successfully at or beyond age appropriate grade level. SBI is a vehicle for restructuring schools in order to meet this goal. It is a process, not a product or a prescription, which uses collaboration and shared decision making. It affords campuses greater decision-making authority in the areas of budget, instructional delivery, personnel, and staff development. This increased flexibility is a way for campuses to restructure to meet the needs of all their students.

PROJECT A+ STRATEGIC GOAL

* The AISD/IBM initiative is part of a nationwide program begun by the Business Roundtable, a Washington-based business association dedicated to examining public policy issues. The Business Roundtable considers public education to be America's most pressing problem, and has encouraged its members to form partnerships with school districts across the nation.

The AISD began moving toward implementation of SBI in August of 1989 with the involvement of more than 700 individuals, including district staff, parents, and community representatives, who participated in three large conferences. As a result of their efforts, four core values were identified which serve as the focus of AISD's instructional delivery and methods of operation. The values are:

AISD CORE VALUES

- **Respect for the Individual**
- **Commitment to Excellence**
- **Collaborative Involvement, and**
- **Equity**

During the 1990-91 school year, the Project A+ Strategic Planning Team, a group of community members and staff, drafted the following as AISD's objectives which are seen as measurable, student-based outcomes that the organization will achieve as it fulfills its mission:

AISD OBJECTIVES

- **Every student will function at his/her optimal level of achievement and progress successfully through the system.**
- **All students will function successfully at or above international standards.**
- **100% of students who enter AISD will graduate.**
- **After exiting AISD, all individuals will be able to perform successfully at their next endeavor.**

Building on this, the AISD Strategic Plan was developed. This plan was completed in October, 1991, and details twelve strategies which are broadly stated means of deploying resources to achieve the four AISD objectives. The Strategic Plan is to operate as the driving force for SBI, as well as all other District projects/activities. (See attachments for the strategy II Action Plan Summary which specifically focuses on the basic principles of SBI.)

In the spring of 1992, a District SBI Committee for Policies, Plans, and Parameters was established, representing central office administrators, principals, teachers, parents, and students. This committee was charged with developing an initial plan, soliciting wide community input, and reviewing and revising District policies and regulations in order to establish roles of District and campus staff and committees in relation to SBI in preparation for going districtwide in the 1992-93 school year. The SBI Policies established by this committee were adopted by the School Board in June, 1992.

POLICIES
PLANS
PARAMETERS

In addition to this committee, an external SBI task force was coordinated by the Project A+ Program Director.

TASK
FORCE

A District SBI Facilitator who had been hired in September of 1990, resigned in December of 1991. Her primary responsibilities were to coordinate overall project activities, provide assistance to individual campuses, facilitate campus planning sessions, develop training based on campus needs, and establish a communication network for the SBI project. Following her resignation, the remainder of scheduled training for the Phase I and Phase II SBI campuses was overseen by an assistant superintendent.

DISTRICT
FACILITATOR

The position of SBI Facilitator has not been filled to date. The status of that position and its duties remains unclear at this time.

Special acknowledgement must be given to Project A+ and the Empowerment Momentum Team who were responsible for initiating SBI, and for requesting this evaluation of the project. Their ongoing support and direction has been a valuable effort to ensure that the implementation of SBI remained consistent with the original goals, as envisioned by the stakeholders.

GOALS/IMPLEMENTATION

THE PILOT SCHOOLS

PHASE I/II SBI SCHOOLS

The first opportunity to pilot the SBI model occurred in the spring of 1990 when AISD accepted applications from 37 campuses interested in being SBI demonstration schools. Of those, 16 were selected to become Phase I SBI campuses in the 1990-91 school year. These included three high schools, three middle schools and ten elementary schools. The selection process was repeated in the spring of 1991, and an additional 12 campuses (seven elementary and five secondary) were chosen to become Phase II SBI campuses in the 1991-92 school year. That school year also served as a transition year in which all other AISD campuses received SBI training in preparation for becoming SBI schools beginning in fall, 1992 as directed by the superintendent.

HB 2885

AISD's intention to go districtwide with SBI had already been established when House Bill 2885 was enacted, requiring all Texas school districts to implement site-based decision making by September, 1992. As a result of that legislation, full implementation of SBI in AISD probably occurred sooner than it would have otherwise.

This evaluation focuses on the 28 Phase I and Phase II campuses.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection criteria for these pilot schools included an application, and a school climate survey developed and coordinated by the National Center for School Leadership. The survey measured the degree of "readiness" on the campuses for shared decision making, as well as the degree of commitment of faculty and parents to the SBI concept. In addition to these factors, geographic/regional distribution, ethnic distribution, and socio-economic levels were taken into consideration in the selection of the pilot schools to ensure that good representation of students and a range of school climates were represented.

The resources available to the SBI campuses included stipends for the initial summer core team, planning time for staff (including early release days and TESD days), a District facilitator, technical assistance from Project A+ Momentum teams, and District support for SBI decisions in the following areas: Budget, Instructional Delivery, Personnel, and Staff Development.

RESOURCES

Each of the 28 SBI campuses established a leadership team (comprised of the principal, teachers, non teaching staff, parents, and community representatives) and implemented shared decision making. A yearly Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) was developed by each of the SBI campuses, outlining short-and long-term goals based on student outcomes.

LEADERSHIP TEAM
CIP

A districtwide management team was formed to oversee the initial implementation of the project, and a waiver process was implemented by which campuses may apply for a waiver from District policy or state regulation. Each waiver request is reviewed by the management team on an individual basis.

TRAINING

Training for the 16 Phase I SBI schools was provided in August, 1990. There were three days of training and one day of campus planning for the five-member teams representing each campus. Considerable attention was paid to providing the campuses in-depth feedback from their School Climate survey, "School Culture Profile Feedback," which was presented by a consultant from the National Center for School Leadership. Other topics were entitled: "TARGET Training (Training Teams)," "AISD Expectations and Information for Demonstration Schools."

PHASE I TRAINING

Following this initial training, a group of administrators, campus staff, and others emerged (the SBI Phase II Committee) which thought that the training received by the Phase I campuses had been too theoretical. This group brainstormed about how best to inform and prepare the Phase II campuses with more technical and practical training including group process skills.

The group also thought that the training should be offered in the spring, allowing the campuses time to process the training before the end of the school year. This committee ended in February, 1991, with a special two hour presentation (as part of an orientation for potential Phase II campuses) entitled "What to Expect as an SBI School."

PHASE II TRAINING

Training for the Phase II campuses in the spring of 1991 consisted of five full-day sessions covering such topics as: Leadership, Communication, Teambuilding, Roles and Responsibilities, Campus Decision-Making Process, Planning, Conflict Resolution, and Data Gathering and Analysis. Throughout the 1991-92 school year, essentially the same topics were offered as training for all other AISD campuses as well, in preparation for fall of 1992 when all schools in the District will make the transition to SBI.

It is important to note that the training provided to the Phase I and Phase II campuses was different in content, timing, and duration.

EVALUATION OVERVIEW

This evaluation focused on the 28 SBI Pilot schools referred to here as the Phase I and Phase II campuses. (For the complete Evaluation Plan, please see attachments.) The major components of the evaluation were personal interviews (individual and group), review of Campus Improvement Plans, District surveys, and student achievement results for 1991-92.

INTERVIEWS

During the spring, six central office administrators were interviewed regarding their expectations, perceptions and assessments of SBI as implemented to date in AISD. On the SBI campuses, almost half of the Leadership Teams were interviewed, as groups, with similar open-ended questions designed to elicit their opinions regarding SBI. The written comments section of the SBI Campus Survey offered another opportunity for Phase I and Phase II staff and parents to communicate their perceptions.

All of these sources were used for feedback about SBI, as well as comments from two SBI training sessions, the final Empowerment Momentum Team meeting, and a Public Forum on SBI.

REVIEW OF CAMPUS IMPROVEMENT PLANS

A review was made of several of the Phase I and Phase II Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs) to gain an understanding of the kinds of campus goals and objectives the schools had established, as well as the methods they had outlined for monitoring/evaluating progress made toward the accomplishment of these goals and objectives. Additionally specified in the CIPs are the AISD goals addressed by each campus objective, and to which Academic Excellence Indicator(s) established by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) each campus goal/objective relates.

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SURVEYS

Results from three 1991-92 AISD surveys were used to gather information about the 28 Phase I and Phase II campuses along with the results of the SBI Campus Survey. Responses to all 20 items from the **SBI Campus Survey**, which directly relate to SBI at the campus level, were thoroughly reviewed. In addition to these, responses to five items from the **Employee Survey** and three years of responses to all 24 items from the **School Climate Survey** (including standardized subscale scores calculated for two years) were examined in order to look at these campuses from the perspectives of staff, parents, and the school community, and specifically to assess the impact made by their transition to SBI.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

GENESYS
ROSE

The primary source of information on student achievement at the Phase I and Phase II campuses was the Generic Evaluation System (GENESYS), a computer system which produces standard information on schools such as standardized achievement test results, criterion-referenced test results, attendance, discipline, grades, retainees, and dropout rate. The Report on School Effectiveness (ROSE), based on a computer program which predicts achievement based on such factors as sex, ethnicity, and socio-economic status, was also an important source of information for this evaluation.

MAJOR FINDINGS

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Student achievement, based on results of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) for grades 1 and 2, and the Norm-Referenced Assessment Program for Texas (NAPT) for grades 3-11, are summarized here for the Phase I and Phase II school groups along with other measures of school success (such as attendance, discipline, grades, and retainees/dropouts). These results presented in relation to AISD averages, to predicted outcome (ROSE), and/or in some cases to the same group of schools in the 1990-91 school year, are also represented in Figure 1.

High Schools

Comparing Phase I and Phase II high Schools, the Phase I group was more successful at achieving and exceeding predicted gains in student achievement (as measured by NAPT scores) than were both the corresponding Phase II group, and the non-SBI high school group. On the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), Phase I high schools exceeded the Phase II high schools (based on the percent of students mastering the subtests) in all areas, and by as much as 13 percentage points in grade 11 reading.

Looking at other measures of school success, the Phase I high schools as a group did better on attendance, discipline, grades, retainees, and dropout rates than the District average. They also outperformed the Phase II group on all of these measures. Grade point averages (GPAs) were higher for the Phase I group of schools in the 1991-92 school year than they had been the previous year. According to the dropout rate predicted for Phase I and Phase II high schools, both groups did better than anticipated, having fewer dropouts than was predicted for the fall semester. (End of year results will be available later.)

Middle Schools

Phase II Middle schools, as a group, were more successful than both the Phase I group and the non-SBI group at achieving and exceeding predicted gains in student achievement. Phase I middle schools, however, showed 10-15 percentage points higher mastery on TAAS than the Phase II group in all subject areas.

On attendance, discipline, grades, retainees, and dropouts, the Phase II group looked better than the Phase I group. Phase II also looked better than District averages on all of these measures except grades, (in which it did show an improvement over the same group of schools in 1990-91). While the Phase II group had a lower dropout rate than predicted, the Phase I group was the only SBI group of schools which had a higher than predicted dropout rate for the fall semester. (End of year results will be available later.)

Elementary Schools

The Phase II elementary schools performed better than the Phase I group on the ITBS/NAPT, demonstrating higher results than National norms in all 12 comparisons. Looking at ROSE, however, the Phase I group performed better than both the Phase II group and the non-SBI elementary group.

On TAAS, the Phase II group performed higher than AISD averages in 6 areas, and lower in 2 areas, while the Phase I schools' results were higher in only 3 areas and lower in 5 areas. Attendance and discipline were quite similar for these two groups, as was the percent of retainees, an area in which the Phase II group's average was identical to that of the District, and the Phase I group's average was slightly lower.

In summary, the 1991-92 student outcomes for Phase I and Phase II SBI schools are mixed. Overall, the Phase I groups at the elementary and high school levels were more successful at achieving and exceeding predicted gains in achievement (ROSE) than were the corresponding Phase II groups, and similarly more successful than the non-SBI elementary and high school groups. The opposite was true at the middle school level, where the Phase II group was more successful according to ROSE than were both the Phase I SBI group and the non-SBI middle school group.

FIGURE 1.
PHASE I AND PHASE II SBI SCHOOLS
1991-92 ACHIEVEMENT
AND OTHER MEASURES OF SCHOOL SUCCESS

	ITBS/NAPT	TAAS	ATTENDANCE	DISCIPLINE	GRADES	RETAINEES/ DROPOUTS
PHASE I HIGH SCHOOLS	5 Above, 1 At Nat'l. Norms ********** Higher than Predicted	Higher than AISD	Higher than AISD ********** Lower than same group 90-91	Lower than AISD ********** Higher Fall, Lower Spring than same group 90-91	Higher than AISD ********** Higher than same group 90-91	Lower than AISD ********** Lower than Predicted (Dropouts)
PHASE II HIGH SCHOOLS	1 At, 5 Below Nat'l. Norms ********** Lower than Predicted	Lower than AISD	Lower than AISD ********** Lower than same group 90-91	Higher than AISD ********** Higher than same group 90-91	Lower than AISD ********** Lower Fall Higher Spring than same group 90-91	Higher than AISD ********** Lower than Predicted (Dropouts)
PHASE I MIDDLE SCHOOLS	1 Above, 2 At, 3 Below Nat'l. Norms ********** Lower than Predicted	Higher than AISD	Higher than AISD ********** Lower than same group 90-91	Lower than AISD ********** Higher than same group 90-91	Lower than AISD ********** Lower than same group 90-91	Lower than AISD ********** Higher than Predicted (Dropouts)
PHASE II MIDDLE SCHOOLS	6 Below Nat'l. Norms ********** Higher than Predicted	Lower than AISD	Higher than AISD ********** Lower than same group 90-91	Lower than AISD ********** Higher than same group 90-91	Lower than AISD ********** Higher than same group 90-91	Lower than AISD ********** Lower than Predicted (Dropouts)
PHASE I ELEMEN.	7 Above, 2 At, 3 Below Nat'l. Norms ********** Higher than Predicted	3 Higher, 5 Lower than AISD	Higher than AISD ********** Lower Fall, Higher Spring than same group 90-91	Lower than AISD ********** Higher Fall, Lower Spring than same group 90-91	(NA)	Lower than AISD
PHASE II ELEMEN.	12 Above Nat'l. Norms ********** Lower than Predicted	6 Higher, 2 Lower than AISD	Higher than AISD ********** Lower Fall, Higher Spring than same group 90-91	Lower than AISD ********** Lower Fall, Higher Spring than same group 90-91	(NA)	Same as AISD

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EMPLOYEE SURVEY

An overall group comparison of Phase I and Phase II schools showed that their responses to the five SBI-related Employee Survey items were quite similar. The item which showed the largest difference, a difference of only six percentage points, concerned the ability of the campus to effectively use student achievement data generated by ORE in making decisions that impact student achievement. Role comparisons showed that with the exception of elementary teachers, Phase II teachers and other campus professionals responded with considerably higher agreement to this item than the corresponding Phase I roles. **This suggests that the District training provided to the Phase II schools enhanced their skills and confidence in using these data on the campus.**

The Phase II middle school teachers also expressed significantly higher agreement than their Phase I counterparts to three other survey items concerning the belief that SBI will lead to improved student outcomes, the perception of the SBI training received as appropriate and helpful for implementation, and a positive attitude on the campus toward SBI. **Perhaps these attitudes contributed to the successful gains of the Phase II middle schools** mentioned previously.

SBI CAMPUS SURVEY

There was a wide range of responses to the SBI Campus Survey on almost all items, and within all groups and campuses. There were over 1,500 respondents, representing teaching and non-teaching staff, and 93 parents. Phase I and Phase II schools were similar in the range of their responses. **Responses from this survey indicate that on key items, such as SBI's openness to staff and parent participation, its recruitment of new parent involvement, and the perception of issues addressed by SBI as being relevant to school goals, there is much work to do in order to fully implement SBI.**

One section of the survey asked if SBI is helping students, staff, and parents to make progress toward achieving the four AISD objectives listed below:

- **Every student will function at his/her optimal level of achievement and progress successfully through the system.**
- **All students will function successfully at or above international standards.**
- **100% of students who enter AISD will graduate.**
- **After exiting AISD, all individuals will be able to perform successfully at their next endeavor.**

AISD OBJECTIVE	PHASE I SCHOOLS	PHASE II SCHOOLS
1.	53% YES	55% YES
2.	38% YES	42% YES
3.	27% YES	27% YES
4.	37% YES	41% YES

Phase I and II school groups responded similarly to this question. The first objective had the highest level of agreement which was 53% "yes" from Phase I schools and 55% "yes" from Phase II schools. The other three objectives had far less agreement, with the second objective having 38% to 42% "yes", the third objective having 27% "yes", and the final objective having 37% to 41% "yes".

Such a dramatic response from what represents a cross-section of the entire District, coupled with multiple comments on this and other sources of feedback, clearly indicates that **the campuses as yet have not "bought into" these AISD objectives, in terms of finding them realistic and attainable, or in terms of seeing SBI as a vehicle for making progress toward achieving them.** (See the Interviews/Comments section for further discussion of campus ownership of these AISD objectives.)

SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY

Change in School Climate

A review of the School Climate Survey results for the Phase I and Phase II campuses was conducted, focusing on the change from the year before to the first year of SBI. For the Phase I schools, the change from the first year to the second year of SBI was also studied.

The pattern that emerged suggests that a considerable drop in degree of agreement to survey items tends to occur from the year before to the first year of SBI. For Phase I schools, this was followed by definite improvement reflected in the change from the first year to the second year of SBI, except in the case of the Phase I high schools in which this pattern was reversed. (The Phase I high schools suffered only a slight drop from the year before to the first year of SBI, and then a significant drop occurred from the first to the second year.)

Interestingly, the Phase II middle schools evidenced a much slighter drop than all other groups reflecting this pattern.

Correlation of Items to Student Achievement

Studies have established that at schools where there is a positive school climate, there is also a higher rate of learning. An awareness of which School Climate Survey items have a high correlation to factors labeled "teachers as professionals" (factor I) and "goals for student learning" (factor II) in AISD was very helpful in analyzing the survey results for the 28 SBI campuses. (For a detailed explanation of this study, see School Climate and Student Achievement, July, 1991.)

The five survey items having the highest correlation to each of these two factors were reviewed for the SBI school groups. Certainly, all of the items are also relevant to the SBI concept, especially those correlating most highly with factor I, "teachers as professionals." (For a listing of these items see Figure 2.)

FIGURE 2.
SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY ITEMS WITH HIGHEST CORRELATION TO STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

TEACHER AS PROFESSIONAL (FACTOR I)	GOALS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (FACTOR II)
1. The principal is willing to discuss problems with professionals.	1. Our school staff believes and demonstrates that all students can attain mastery.
2. My decisions as a professional are supported and respected by my campus administrator.	2. Our school staff has high expectations for success.
3. The channels of communication among the faculty, administrators, and other staff at my building are open and adequate.	3. Our school has a clear and focused mission through which our entire staff shares an understanding and commitment to school goals.
4. The resolution of conflict or problems is addressed positively in my school.	4. Our school staff works together to improve instruction.
5. There is collaborative planning and decision making in my school.	5. At our school there is frequent monitoring of student progress. The results of assessments are used to improve individual student proficiency.

Elementary

It was found that at the elementary level, both Phase I and Phase II SBI schools had high agreement on these ten survey items. In the case of the Phase I group, agreement to all ten items was in the 86%-99% range. In the Phase II group, only item ten (open channels of communication) was somewhat lower at 77% agreement.

Middle School

The SBI middle school groups were quite different from one another. The Phase I schools showed the lowest agreement (51%-70%) to all of the five items correlating highly to factor I (teachers as professionals) and were somewhat low (71%-79%) in two of the five items correlating highly to factor II (student learning).

By contrast, the Phase II middle school group showed 80%-91% agreement to all of these items except for item ten (channels of communication/factor I) which had 78% agreement.

High School

A review of the SBI high school groups showed Phase I and Phase II to be similar concerning these ten items. Phase I high schools had two items with 73%-78% agreement (factor I), and one item with 77% agreement (factor II). Phase II high schools had three items with 72%-77% agreement (factor I), and two items with 72%-76% agreement (factor II).

Subscale Scores

Another way in which this study gave meaning to the School Climate Survey results of the SBI campuses, was to offer a standardized subscale within which to measure these school groups against the District average. This subscale reflects relative differences between schools within the same grade level categories. On a scale from 1 to 10, the District mean is 7. Knowing this, and that overall the District school climate remains stable, it was meaningful to review results and changes in subscale scores (available for 1990-91 and 1991-92).

SCORES BELOW AISD MEAN & DROPPING

There were eight Phase I schools, and eight Phase II schools who scored below the District mean on the subscales. This represents 57% of the SBI schools, and of that group, nine schools (56%) showed some degree of drop from the previous year on these factors. **These nine schools are the ones in which the most dramatic changes must occur if they are to be successful in the full implementation of SBI.** Targeting these weak areas, and understanding their implications, will be critical for these schools.

INTERVIEWS/COMMENTS

Expectations of SBI

A review of the sources of feedback for this report revealed a range of expectations of SBI held by central office administrators, SBI campus staff, parents, business and other community representatives. Presented here are composites of typical expectations, etc.

Most often mentioned as expectations of SBI were such things as:

- better communication;
- collaborative decision making;
- control, autonomy, and empowerment for the campus community;
- improved student success;
- increased creativity, innovativeness, flexibility, and freedom to try new instructional approaches and tailor policies to meet the needs of students;
- sense of ownership and accountability;
- a more aware and unified staff;
- improved staff training;
- better use of resources; and
- more parental and community involvement.

The term "consensus" meant different things to different individuals. While one person understood that the Leadership Team would have the final word, another understood that the Leadership Team would make the final decision only after a faculty vote. Still others defined consensus as 100% agreement and therefore impossible to reach.

What's right with SBI?

The following were typically perceived to have worked most effectively in regards to SBI:

- training;
- more staff and parent involvement, input, and ownership;
- increased awareness of overall school's needs;
- more cooperation, communication, and empowerment;
- "bottom-up" planning;
- faster implementation of ideas; and
- the Campus Improvement Plan (CIP).

What's wrong with SBI?

By contrast, the following were typically perceived to have worked least effectively in regards to SBI:

- lack of clear definitions, guidelines, and objectives for implementation;
- general confusion concerning parameters;
- time constraints;
- difficulty with concept of consensus;
- difficulty implementing SBI when principal is "non-collaborative" by nature;
- lack of adequate training, direction, and resources for local campuses;
- little progress on "systematic abandonment";
- central office staff brought into planning/training process too late; and
- lack of adequate support from the School Board.

Not necessarily specific to SBI, but mentioned repeatedly in the written comments section of the SBI survey was a difficulty with the content of the four AISD objectives, especially the last three. Many of the campus respondents consider these objectives to be unrealistic and impossible to achieve.

Changes resulting from SBI

The following specific changes were among those cited by individual schools as resulting from SBI:

- new discipline plan;
- new school day schedule, earlier schedule for Kindergarten;
- team teaching;
- literature-based reading (the study of several countries to tie into whole language approach);
- zero-hour classes;
- exam and textbook waivers;
- weighted grades;
- operational computer lab;
- expanded reading tutor program; and
- parent committees.

Among the many general changes listed were: better communication and identification of needs; collaborative decision making with more teacher input, a more cohesive faculty with more ownership, a restructured information flow, a move from many committees to one leadership team which has correlates and strands, and the freedom to tailor the curriculum to meet the needs of a specific classroom.

What's needed for SBI's success?

Mentioned most often as being necessary at the District level in order to foster the success of SBI were the following:

- ongoing training for whole faculties (especially group process skills) and provisions for attending training (e.g., early release days);
- commitment, trust and support from central office and the Board;
- an established structure for SBI;
- better communication;
- the opportunity to visit other SBI schools and hear speakers on SBI; and
- a District SBI facilitator.

Similarly, the following were frequently mentioned as being necessary <u>at the campus level</u> for the success of SBI:

- a supportive principal;
- targeting training needs;
- developing a plan of action;
- limiting the number of goals addressed concurrently to about two;
- adding new members to the Leadership Team;
- working together more as a whole faculty;
- reaching a better understanding of the parameters of SBI; and
- learning more about tailoring curriculum, managing budgets, collaborative decision making, reaching consensus, and other group process skills.

Summary

To summarize, the feedback received to date about SBI has been broad and varied. Opinions ranged from high praise for "the best thing that's happened to Education in years," to contempt for "a political exercise of no real value." To be sure, there have been real "growing pains" resulting from the considerable changes and challenges being addressed on these 28 campuses. Time is a crucial element in the full transition to SBI, as the literature repeatedly confirms. (Please see References.)

CONCLUSIONS

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

STUDENT OUTCOMES

The 1991-92 student outcomes described in this report for the Phase I and Phase II SBI schools are mixed. Overall, the Phase I groups at the high school and elementary levels were more successful at achieving and exceeding predicted gains in student achievement (based on ROSE) than were the corresponding Phase II groups, and similarly more successful than the non-SBI elementary and high school groups. The opposite was true at the middle school level, where the Phase II group was more successful according to ROSE than were both the Phase I SBI group and the non-SBI middle school group.

SCHOOL CLIMATE

SUBSCALE SCORES

There were 16 of the 28 SBI schools, (eight Phase I and eight Phase II), whose 1991-92 School Climate Survey subscale scores were below the District mean in one or more of the three factors. Of those, there were nine schools, (five Phase I and four Phase II), whose subscale scores reflected a drop from the previous year on these factors. It is these nine elementary and secondary schools for whom active targeting of the weak school climate areas will be the most critical if they are to succeed as SBI campuses.

PATTERN OF CHANGE

The School Climate Survey results further suggest that for the SBI schools, a drop tends to occur from the year before implementation to the first year of SBI. For the Phase I campuses reflecting this pattern, the drop was followed by an improvement from the first year to the second year of SBI.

AISD OBJECTIVES

The SBI campuses, representing a cross-section of the District, clearly have not yet "bought-into" the four AISD objectives in terms of finding them realistic and obtainable, and in terms of seeing SBI as a vehicle for making progress toward achieving them.

TRAINING

Training differed for the Phase I and Phase II SBI campuses. From survey results, it appears that the District training provided to the Phase II campuses did enhance their skills and confidence in analyzing and using ORE-generated data on student achievement in making decisions at the campuses that impact student learning.

ENHANCED SKILLS

FEEDBACK/MISCELLANEOUS

Based on feedback from surveys, interviews, meetings, training, and a public forum, it is clear that there have been many obstacles to overcome in the piloting of SBI. Chief among these obstacles are:

- varied expectations, levels of understanding and ownership of SBI,
- differential training for Phase I and II schools, and central office staff,
- lack of adequate and timely clarification of roles, policies, parameters from central office administration,
- lack of universal commitment to SBI from Board, central office, and others,
- need for ongoing training for whole faculties instead of "training to train",
- varying degrees of willingness to practice collaborative decision making and consensus,
- issues of trust, and
- the impact of change.

OBSTACLES

In addition to these obstacles, there has been some breakdown of continuity and follow-through of the vision, goals, and direction set during the two-year process of planning and developing the SBI concept. This was evidenced, for example, by the fact that although a comprehensive report, written in August, 1990 by Organizational Analysis & Practice (OAP) as a follow-up to a workshop for central administrators, raised many important questions concerning the scope, structure, process, and support of the proposed SBI program, these issues were never formally addressed.

DEGREE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Some of the SBI pilot schools have already successfully implemented SBI, and can point to some tangible changes on their campuses that have resulted such as **team teaching**, **block time scheduling**, **decision (waiver) not to use a certain textbook**, etc. Indeed, there are campuses on which there were already collaborative decision making and other SBI concepts operating before they were selected to become pilot schools.

Most of these schools, however, are in the process of making small changes, adjusting to new group dynamics and to new roles and expectations, "testing the waters," and slowly moving towards becoming SBI schools, a difficult process requiring considerable time.

Three of the SBI pilot schools are also Accelerated Schools, and there has been some overlap of concepts and training for them. Several other SBI schools are also Chapter I schools or District Priority Schools. These additional resources and influences must be taken into account when assessing these schools, as must the impact of concurrent, districtwide reorganizational changes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- SBI schools must continue to use student achievement data as feedback and in planning instructional delivery on their individual campuses, with special emphasis being given to ROSE.

- The SBI schools must fully use the information available to them in their School Climate Survey results. Weak areas should be targeted in CIPs and progress should be monitored. Those campuses below the District mean on subscale scores, and especially those campuses who are also dropping on these factors, should analyze the implications of their results in terms of correlation to student achievement, and make improvement in these weak areas a high priority.

- Phase I and all other schools should be provided training in analyzing student achievement data for campus planning (as was provided to Phase II schools).

- Guidelines should be developed by the District to assist the SBI campuses in assessing their own progress on annual Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) goals and objectives, and in carrying over unmet goals, etc. to the following school year's CIP.

  Furthermore, a climate of creativity and risk-taking must be set at the District level in order to encourage innovation in CIPs. (This was a recommendation made by elementary and secondary administrators to the School Board in April, 1992. For Board agenda item, see attachment 5.)

- AISD must model SBI concepts such as shared decision making at all levels if it is to demonstrate a true commitment to its success. Along with this commitment, there must be evidence of strong support for the SBI campuses coming from the central administration and the School Board. Support, communication, training, feedback, and time are crucial ingredients if the SBI campuses are to be successful.

- AISD must have a key person with the ownership and responsibility of overseeing SBI districtwide who can:
  - provide overall continuity;
  - ensure that the momentum of the project is not lost;
  - provide a link between schools and the central office; and
  - ensure that the needs of the campuses are being met regarding their transition to SBI.

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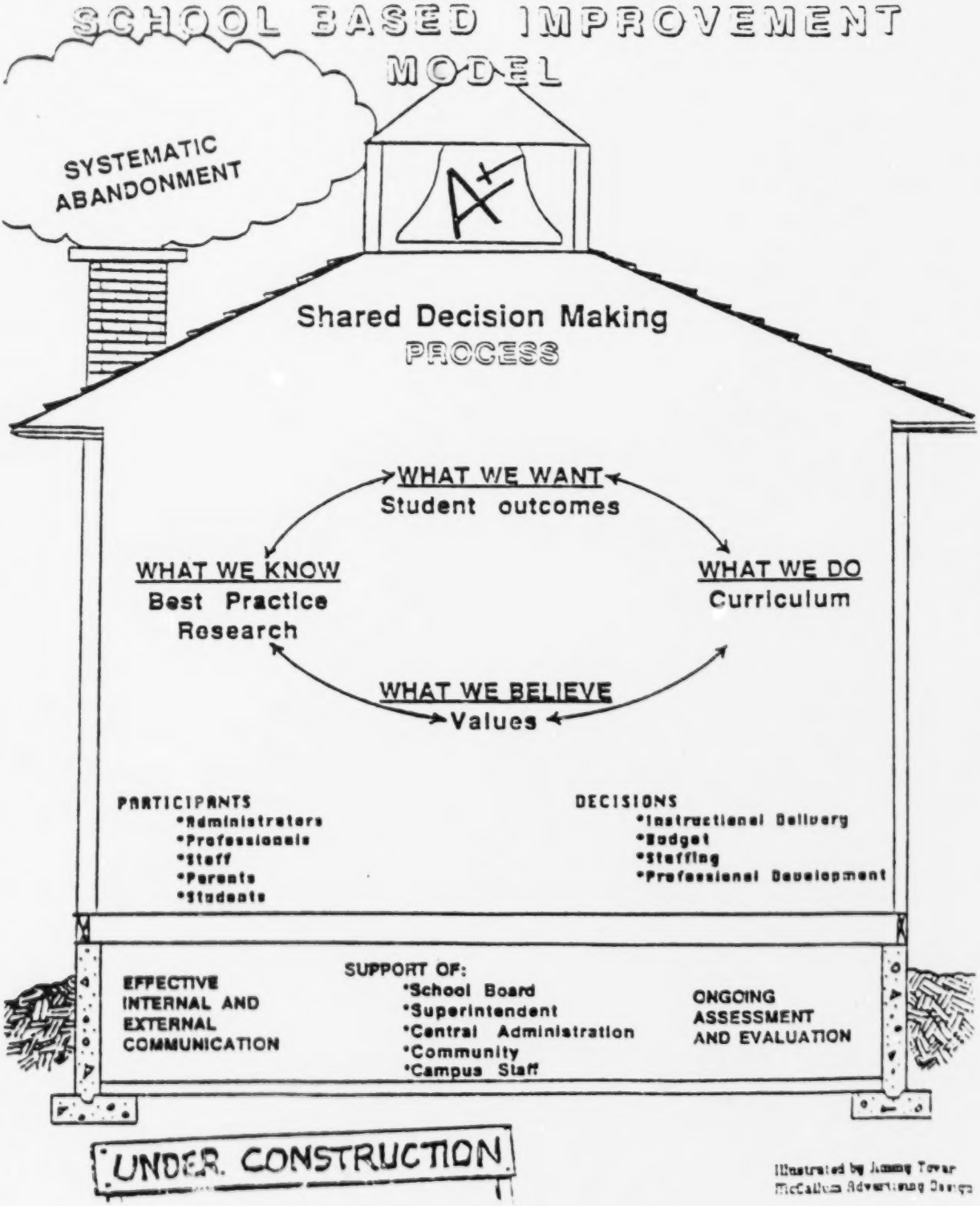
ATTACHMENT 1

SBI Evolutionary Timeline

SY 88/89	"Principal Autonomy Committee" discussion began.
Spring/89	Long-term partnership IBM/AISD began.
Aug./89	Empowerment Momentum Team was formed.
Fall/89	School House Model was developed.
Aug./89-Jan./90	700+ participants attending three large conferences identified four "Core Values" for AISD.
Nov./89-Dec./89	Admin., tea., parents,and community reps. were identified for Empowerment Team, advisory council, & steering committee.
April/90	37 schools applied; 16 were selected as Phase I SBI schools.
June/90	Senate Bill 1 was enacted. All districts must adopt policies & procedures creating campus committees to develop performance objectives.
Sept./90	SBI Facilitator was hired for AISD.
Oct./90	SBI Management Team was established.
Nov./90	Strategic Planning Team process began, with the executive committee reaching consensus on SBI's beliefs, mission statement, objectives, and strategic parameters.
SY 90/91	30-person planning team worked on philosophical framework and objectives, and 300+ action team members reached consensus on implementation plan for those ideas/statements.
Spring/91	Of schools applying, 12 were selected as Phase II SBI schools.
May/91	House Bill 2885 was enacted. All districts must implement site-based decision making by September, 1992.
May/91	District facilitator coordinated retreat to develop SBI Mission statement, goals, and objectives.
Sept./91	TEA established advisory committee reflecting all constituents.
Oct./91	AISD Strategic Plan was completed as a result of one year of meetings which involved 300+ individuals. Plan is seen as the driving force for SBI.
Nov./91	Strategic Plan is adopted by the School Board.
Spring/92	Internal: District committee established to develop Policies, Plans and Procedures for SBI districtwide. External: SBI task force headed by Project A+ Program Director.
June/92	SBI policies adopted by School Board.

ATTACHMENT 2

School House Model



ATTACHMENT 3

SBI Mission Statement and Goals

Mission Statement

The mission of the School Based Improvement Project, as a catalyst for innovative change, is to prepare all students for the enjoyment and challenges of life by empowering each school community to set and address local priorities through collaboration and shared decision making.

Goals

- Provide all students with a life long love of learning that will enable them to achieve and to succeed in a global society.
- Create an environment that encourages and rewards responsible innovation.
- Restructure the district to support the local campus.
- Foster and nurture ownership and trust in the schools by students, parents, staff, and the community.
- Establish collaborative decision making to serve the unique community needs of each school and to benefit our primary customers - our students.
- Ensure that students, staff, and community are accountable for student outcomes.

ATTACHMENT 4

STRATEGY II
ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

WE WILL IMPLEMENT PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT AT ALL LEVELS

GOAL:

To have participatory management involving all stakeholders throughout AISD.

Participatory management is defined as the process that provides for the active involvement of all stakeholders in planning, decision making, implementation, and evaluation for optimal student success. The AISD recognizes that there are stakeholders among campus, District, and community that need to be part of the participatory management process. Key features of participatory management include active input, honest communication, trust, consensus, and demonstration of mutual respect.

AISD stakeholders are individuals, groups, or organizations within the geographical area of the District who have an interest in or who are affected by the District's operations. They include, but are not limited to, students, parents, educators, administrators, support staff, school board members, community representatives, businesses, churches, neighborhood associations, non-profit organizations, other educational institutions, government agencies, and local taxpayers.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To involve all stakeholders so that optimal success for each student is the focus of all decisions within AISD.
2. To incorporate a commitment to participatory management in all AISD Board policies and administrative regulations.
3. To increase the involvement of all stakeholders in participatory management in all aspects of AISD operations.
4. To insure access for all stakeholders affected or impacted by a decision to be part of the participatory management process from the initial stages. (STIPULATION: The Board of Trustees and Superintendent recognize that this action plan is crucial to the success of the entire Strategic Plan.)
5. To evolve the District administration's function from a directive role to a supportive role for participatory management.
6. To achieve mutual trust, honesty, and respect among all all stakeholders.

91.32

ATTACHMENT 5

Board Agenda Item April, 1992

SUBJECT: Campus Improvement Plans

PRESENTERS: David Hill
La Vonne Rogers

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Elementary and Secondary staff members have read the Campus Improvement Plans for the elementary and secondary schools and special campuses.

These Campus Improvement Plans have been developed as a result of a collaborative effort at each campus. For many schools this is a new process. It requires new leadership skills and strategies for the principal. Bringing parents, teachers, community members, and sometimes students to consensus on goals and objectives for the whole school requires group process skills. Principals cannot direct or dictate. They must guide, persuade, infuse, and influence in order to lead.

Developing the CIP is an educational process that requires time for everyone on the leadership team to learn about special student needs and "best practice" strategies to meet these needs. School teams must be trained in the use of data, and "best practice" ideas must be constantly infused into the schools.

The advantages of this collaboration outweigh the problems. There is a broader ownership of the plans. The leadership teams and, on many campuses, a much larger group of parents and staff members support the goals and objectives of the plan, and are involved in implementing the strategies.

The goals and objectives of these plans are directed at student outcomes and are based on identified campus needs. Some schools have set too many objectives. Focusing on fewer objectives in the future will be more productive. However, this situation was created by TEA's requirement that every academic excellence indicator be addressed.

Although these CIP's do not, for the most part, contain innovative or "cutting edge" ideas, the strategies included do represent sound practice in schools. **To encourage innovation in the future, a climate for creativity and risk-taking must be set.** To create this climate, we must:

- provide ongoing professional development,
- infuse new ideas, and
- reward risk-taking in all schools.

ATTACHMENT 5 (CONTINUED)

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATION

At this time, the elementary and secondary staff do not recommend any changes in the plans developed by the school leadership teams. These objectives and strategies have school ownership and any requirement to change them will meet with strong resistance. Plans for professional development are built into the SBI training sessions. These professional development activities include training on analyzing and using student data, implementing the planning process and reviewing model CIP's. An ongoing process for a systematic infusion of "best practice" ideas is also underway. In addition, elementary and secondary staff will visit each campus to review the CIP and discuss student outcomes with the principals. Further, interviews with teachers and community members will determine how visible the plan is. This process will provide an avenue for productive improvement. The Campus Improvement Plans are on file in the Board Conference room and are available for review.

ACTION REQUIRED

None.

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